

5 **REMARKABLE WOMEN**
Celebrating females from around the world who have made their marks on history.

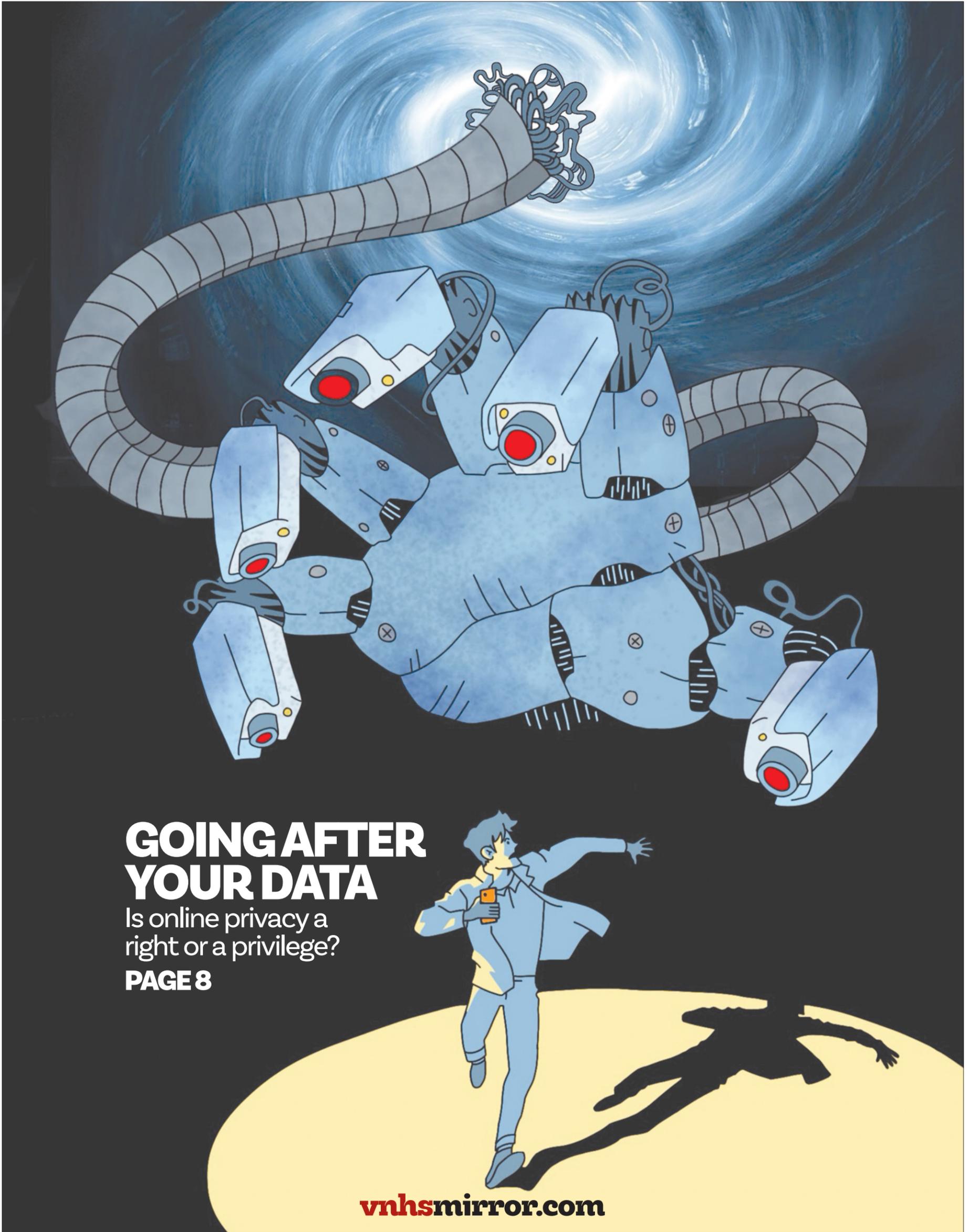
11 **FORGIVE AND FORGET?** Sex abuse, pedophilia, murder, theft: Do artists deserve to be forgiven for their wrongdoings?

12 **BTS IS BACK ON TOP** The Bangtan Boys dominate the charts once again with their latest 20-track release "Map of the Soul: 7?"

theMIRROR

MARCH 2020 | Van Nuys High School | Van Nuys, California

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GOING AFTER YOUR DATA

Is online privacy a right or a privilege?

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vnhsmirror.com

OVER HEARD



It was perfectly fine. I think that everything was like a normal day.”

BRIDGET HERRERA

Student, on the WASC accreditation visit that happens every three years.



The coronavirus is a known **virus** and has been around for a long time. It affects a lot of chronically-ill kids and elderly people’s immune systems.”

NURSE ASHLEY SMITH

School nurse, on covid-19’s possible impact.



I feel like his life story made us think about ourselves and how we can improve our time and **start our dreams now** instead of just later and forget what we want to do.”

ANTHONY ASIS

Student, on the Build a Tree motivational assembly on March 3.

SAVE THE DATE
MARCH



- 9** Teen Court: 3:15-4:15 p.m.
- 12** Multicultural Day: Noon-1 p.m.
- 17** Blood Drive: 6 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- 19** Pippin matinee: 3:30-6 p.m.
- 20-21** Pippin Performance: 7 p.m.-10 p.m.
- 23** Teen Court: 3:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m.
- 26** Open House: 5-7 p.m.
- 30** CAST Science Testing; Spirit Week begins



SHUTTERSTOCK | ALONA SAVCHUK

The American Teenager The “F” word: Feminism front and center by Lou Pendergrass



What it means to be a modern woman is what it means to be the inheritor of millennia of oppression. Our concepts of gender in this day and age are largely shaped by centuries of history, during which white men maintained the upper hand and crafted the world as they saw fit.

Womanhood as we know it is descended from these ideas. Standards of beauty for women have always been higher than those for men, and they were consistently based around what men at the time saw as attractive. These standards often disregarded women of color, gender-nonconforming women and anyone who was seen to be outside of the sphere of European “beauty.”

It is not just archaic beauty standards that haunt the women of today. We are dogged by patriarchy at every step, moving through the world on constant defense. Ask any of your female friends if she has been catcalled, sexualized, assaulted or made to feel less than by a man because she was simply not one of his kind. I guarantee she will have experienced at least one of these things.

From every step we take, we are held to a different standard than our male counterparts, whether that be in the workplace, in our education or in the home. From birth, we are expected to be consistently silent and submissive, to step down and let the men take center-stage. I can’t recall how many times I’ve been called bossy or rude for simply filling the same space and taking the same actions my male counterparts did. Women are held to a harsh double standard in today’s world. This narrative, at least in the West, is changing thanks to the women who came before us: women who fought against a society in which their fight seemed doomed to fail.

These women looked out onto a world in which their fundamental rights were suppressed. Fundamental American ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were not — and arguably are still not entirely — granted to women until the previous century.

Women only achieved the right to vote in 1919 with the 19th Amendment after over 70 years of Suffragettes fighting tooth and nail. Indigenous women achieved the right to vote state by state, with Utah being the last state to recognize Native American Women’s Suffrage in 1962. Black women couldn’t vote across the U.S. until 1966 when all the barriers which should have been lifted with the creation of the 19th Amendment were finally removed. Black women were also excluded from much of the early women’s suffrage movement

because of systemic racism.

American women couldn’t even open their own credit card accounts until 1974 when the Equal Credit Opportunity Act was passed. Up until then they remained hostage in marriage and under the financial control of husbands. Marital rape was fully legal and recognized as a consensual form of sexual contact until 1993 when it was finally criminalized in all 50 states.

Such recent and rapid changes are all thanks to women who defied the conventions of a patriarchal society — women who stood up and spat in the face of the men who told them to stay quiet. We owe everything to them.

“The history of progress is written in the blood of men and women who have dared to espouse an unpopular cause, as, for instance, the black man’s right to his body, or woman’s right to her soul,” wrote Anarchist, feminist, revolutionary and writer Emma Goldman.

The women who came before us have spilled blood; They have ached for the liberation of their souls. American women have come far as a whole. We have fought against every patriarchal device which holds us, have pushed so hard for everything we have gained, but there is still so much more work to be done. We as American women cannot say we live in an equitable society until every woman in every corner of the world is free, until every woman truly owns her soul and body. When that day comes, I hope at least a drop of my blood is used to write the history that led to it.

IN BRIEF

Academic Decathlon team advances to state competition

The Academic Decathlon (AcaDec) team will attend the 2020 state competition in Sacramento March 26-29 after placing 8th at regionals against 54 schools in LAUSD and winning 15 individual medals.

AcaDec competitions consist of 10 events: multiple choice tests in art, economics, math, music, social science, literature and science, performance events such as speech and interview and an essay based on either art, literature or science.

The curricular theme for 2019 to 2020 is In Sickness and in Health: An Exploration of Illness and Wellness which will be explored in seven subject areas. • ANI TUTUNJYAN

Two students declared finalists for National Merit Scholarship

Seniors Nathan Oh and Phillip Hyon advanced as finalists in the National Merit Scholarship program, which aims to reward high-achieving high school students through scholarships.

To be a National Merit Scholar, students must take the Preliminary SAT/NMSQT test their junior year. Oh and Hyon are part of over 15,000 students who qualified as finalists. About half of the finalists will be named National Merit Scholars later this year.

“I feel like my success proved that the SAT system is fair, because I didn’t take any SAT classes, just worked hard from elementary to high school,” Hyon said. • MHAR TENORIO & KAYLA LEE

Cultures will collide during annual campus Multicultural Day

Diversity will fill the quad on Thursday, March 12 as the school celebrates Multicultural Day during an extended one hour lunch featuring ethnic food and performances from campus clubs. “The goal is for authentic performances and authentic food as much as possible for as many people to explore the various, diverse cultures that make up the Van Nuys campus,” ASB Advisor Jacob Ferrin said.

Isabella Rivera, a member of AP Spanish Club looks forward to sharing her culture. “I’m excited for students to experience the taste of my Hispanic culture and can hopefully be more aware of not just my culture but others as well.” • OSCAR JIMENEZ

New Dean of discipline committed to helping students succeed

New Dean of Students Brian Acosta has been interested in working with students since day one. Before taking his position here, Acosta was dean at Sutter Middle School in Winnetka two years ago. He decided to give this school a try after hearing positive things about its programs and students.

Acosta is in charge of discipline and safety on campus. He also tracks the academic progress of students and attempts to address attendance and disciplinary issues. He finds both to be difficult tasks but is determined to improve student attendance and reduce disciplinary issues. “I am hoping to help the students succeed.” • ANI TUTUNJYAN

First woman in space

On June 16, 1963, aboard spaceflight Vostok 6, Soviet Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to travel into space.
SOURCE: HISTORY.COM



CREATIVE COMMONS | RIA NOVOSTI

GOING AGAIN NASA plans a return mission to Earth's natural satellite, Luna, as early as 2024.



SOURCE | NASA

Back to the Moon: "A huge step for humanity"

By **OSCAR JIMENEZ**
THE MIRROR STAFF

It has been nearly 50 years since a human being has visited Earth's nearest planetary neighbor.

The last man who stepped on the Moon's surface was Eugene Cernan. He did it as part of the Apollo 17 crew in 1972.

Since then, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the U.S. space agency, has relied primarily on robotic missions to explore our solar system, sending probes to study the Moon, Venus, Mars and the outer planets.

But now NASA plans to land the first woman and next man on the Moon as soon as 2024 to continue manned exploration of the lunar surface.

NASA has named this new mission Artemis for the goddess of the Moon and twin sister of Apollo, the name of NASA's previous mission to the Moon.

NASA will be taking applications for the next class group of Artemis Generation

astronauts from March 2 to 31, 2020.

The space agency's plan for the next Moon landing is already in the works with hopes to establish a lunar base by 2050.

The first lunar base will be constructed underground and will include a biological experiment and research as announced by the International Lunar Exploration Working Group, a public forum sponsored by the world's space agencies including NASA.

The base will adopt a streamlined design, adapting to the Moon's rising and falling surface.

It will also be equipped with an emergency underground shelter and workers will have individual working and sleeping units.

Eventually, NASA hopes to add a greenhouse to provide fresh vegetables, fruits and crops for the people living inside.

Scientists will also conduct experiments to search for iron ore and water.

The material of the base's wall will be able to maintain the internal temperature and prevent oxygen leakage making it habitable for humans.

Ultimately, NASA hopes to send greater numbers of people to live on the Moon once the outpost can support itself.

NASA is laying the foundation that will eventually enable human exploration of Mars through the Artemis program and deeper exploration of the Moon, testing

different technologies and resources that may eventually allow humans to colonize other parts of the solar system. Both the Moon and Mars lack a breathable atmosphere. Neither have currently accessible sources of water or food.

The mission is projected to cost more than \$30 billion.

NASA's Artemis program also aims to send the first woman to the Moon.

This announcement came amid female Astronaut Christina Koch's return from her record-breaking stay on the International Space Station where she spent 328 days.

"I have a daughter. She is 11 years old, and I want her to see herself in the same position that our current, very diverse astronaut corps currently sees itself, having the opportunity to go to the Moon," said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine during a town hall meeting discussing the 2024 Artemis budget.

Space enthusiasts, including senior Johnny Limon, believe that NASA's return to the Moon is a great step for mankind.

"Going back to the Moon is a huge step for humanity because it means we are going to be able to travel and see the Moon and maybe soon we can also send people to Mars," he said. "It's awesome that we are progressing and sending the first woman to the Moon. We are going to witness a lot of this in our lives."

covid-19 update: California declares health emergency

By **ANI TUTUNJYAN**
THE MIRROR NEWS EDITOR

As confirmed cases of covid-19, more commonly known as coronavirus, continue to rise worldwide and the concern of it becoming a pandemic alarms many, Americans are beginning to question how school districts will respond to the virus.

LAUSD has not yet instructed its schools to take action against the virus, since the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has announced that there is no immediate public threat in Los Angeles at this time.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health and part of the president's covid-19 task force, warned that at some point, schools may have to close to stem the spread of the virus. Japan has closed its schools for at least one month.

It is unknown how LAUSD would implement campus closures if they become necessary, but Superintendent Austin Beutner's video suggests that closure time would have to be made up at the end of the semester.

As of printing, there are 14 confirmed cases of covid-19 in Los Angeles County. On March 4, LA County declared a public health emergency to address issues such as staffing resources.

None of the cases are believed to be community spread as all the individuals were exposed to covid-19 through close contacts with others who were infected.

LAUSD recommends taking the same precautions students would to prevent any other disease such as the influenza.

This includes regularly washing your



GOING VIRAL Lining up to buy surgical masks in China in the midst of covid-19 pandemic.

hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoiding unnecessary touching of your eyes, nose or mouth, covering a sneeze or cough and staying at home when you have a fever or are sick.

In a recent video updating parents and students on the District's plans for covid-19, the Superintendent explained that the District is working closely with experts in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, California Department of Education and more to monitor the progression of the virus to be prepared to respond to any threats.

"The health experts at the county and CDC will provide us with information as they have it, as well as specific instructions on school operations in the event of any occurrence of the virus in our school community," he said.

The District is also creating a plan in the

case that there is community spread.

"We're also making plans for learning to continue from home if any schools were to be closed, as well as the possibility of extending the school year to make up for disruption in the school calendar if necessary," Beutner said in the video message.

"The coronavirus is a known virus and it has been around for a long time," school Nurse Ashley Smith said. "It affects a lot of chronically ill kids and elderly people's immune systems. Just like everything else, people that are generally healthy, it doesn't affect."

Smith believes that students should be alert, not anxious. She explains that Los Angeles along with many other cities and the CDC have long prepared for a pandemic outbreak.

"[Coronavirus] is just like anything else," she said. "Whole cities and countries have been preparing for this so this isn't some-

thing that we are totally unprepared for."

Each classroom was supplied with a bottle of alcohol-free hand sanitizer to encourage students to practice proper hand hygiene. Teachers have also received sanitizing wipes with bleach to clean desks and other surfaces. There has been a run on most cleaning and sanitizing agents and most area stores are sold out.

The prospect of school closing as a result of a coronavirus outbreak has raised concern among teachers who are unsure of whether they will be paid or not during that period.

"It would be up to the state of California because LAUSD gets paid by the state of California when you [students] show up to school," UTLA representative and school chapter chair Mr. Robert Crosby said. "If LA Unified gets paid, then they will pay teachers. It depends on what the state of California does, and there's no word yet on what the state of California will do."

The CDC addressed the rapidly evolving virus during a telebriefing update on covid-19 during which they highlighted the possibility of a pandemic and community spread in the U.S.

Currently, there are no official vaccines on the market for coronavirus but Moderna Therapeutics, a biotech company based in Cambridge, Mass., has recently shipped the first batches of its covid-19 vaccine for trials.

The first vials were sent to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health, which will prepare the vaccine for human testing as early as April. Pharmaceutical companies and health experts say any potential vaccine is a minimum 18 months away from coming on the market.

College loans: Could where you go to college come back to bite you when you graduate?

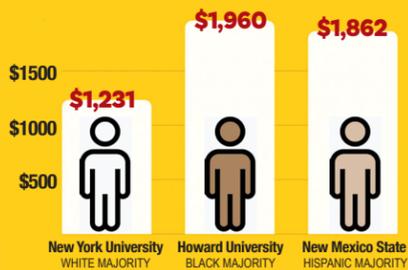
THE MIRROR | IVAN DELGADO

HIGHER LOAN COSTS FOR ATTENDING MINORITY COLLEGES

A watchdog group from the Student Borrower Protection Center applied for a \$30,000 student loan for three different schools on Upstart, a leading online platform. They found that students at Black- and Latino-majority schools paid more.

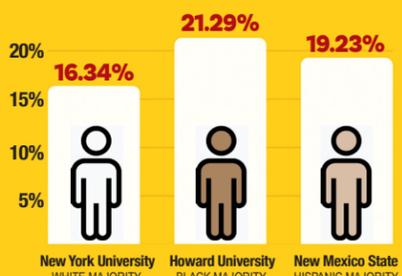
LOAN ORIGATION FEE

Student cost for taking out the loan.



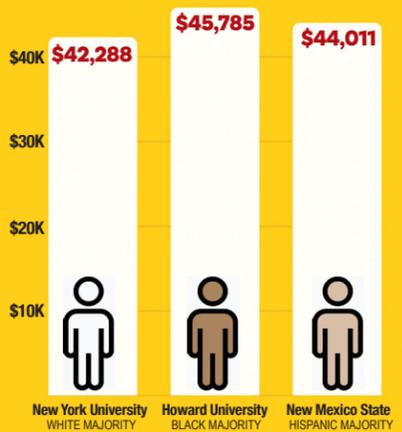
LOAN INTEREST RATE

Student cost for taking out the loan.



TOTAL LOAN COST

Total amount paid the \$30,000 loan is paid back.



SOURCE | STUDENT BORROWER PROTECTION CENTER

Loan companies may be discriminating against students attending Black and Hispanic colleges by charging them higher fees and interest rates

By **MHAR TENORIO & STEPHANIE CACERES**
THE MIRROR STAFF

Does race play a factor in your student loans? It can if you're African American or Hispanic. Some financial firms may be raising the price of interest rates for students who graduated from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), according to "Educational Redlining," a recent study from the Student Borrower Protection Center (SBPC), a nonprofit organization that aims to end struggles with student debt.

Former New York Attorney General and current Governor Andrew Cuomo first raised concerns over the so-called educational redlining in 2007, pointing out how loaners were factoring in where college students graduated from to determine fees and rates.

To test this claim, a watchdog group from the SBPC applied for a loan on Upstart, an online lending platform. They posed as a 24-year-old man who lives in New York and makes \$50,000 a year as a financial analyst.

Keeping every factor constant except the applicant's school, the group discovered that it costs \$3,500 more in interest and fees if he went to Howard University, an HBCU, compared to New York University (NYU).

The study also showed that it would cost at least \$1,724 more for a five-year loan for a graduate from New Mexico State University, an HSI, compared to NYU.



HIGHER FEES Students Bella Thomas and Julian Berger may face college loan discrimination.

The study also uncovered that Wells Fargo, a San Francisco-based bank that offers student loans, sometimes charges community college students more for loans than it charges four-year college students.

Using the bank's online loan estimator, SBPC input data for a hypothetical community college borrower and a four-year student borrower, uncovering that Wells Fargo charges \$1,134 more on a \$10,000 loan for a community college student.

In California, a little over 50 percent of community college students are either Hispanic or African American.

Both Upstart and Wells Fargo have rejected these claims from the SBPC.

Seth Frotman, SBPC Executive Director, however, still stands by the organization's report.

"Despite assurances by these lenders that their practices lift up consumers from marginalized communities, our analysis shows that educational redlining can further drive disparities and inequality," said Frotman in a press release.

A study from the United College Negro Fund found that HBCU students borrow

at a rate of 80 percent compared to 55 percent for students who attend non-HBCU institutions.

The study also stated that HBCU students borrow around \$11,385 more, on average, compared to other students.

HBCUs, however, typically cost less than other institutions.

For college students who graduated in 2012, a study from Student Loan Hero, a company helping borrowers manage their student debt, found that Hispanic and African American students from four-year public and private non-profit universities graduated with higher amounts of debt.

SBPC urges financial services to publish data regarding these practices and their effects on individual borrowers in a press release statement.

This, according to the SBPC, will empower lawmakers, regulators and the general public to increase oversight and to take immediate action on practices possibly violating fair lending laws.

"It is time for law enforcement to act," said Frotman.

THE MIRROR | IVAN DELGADO



SPARE CHANGE Donation boxes are provided in each fourth period classroom.

Fundraising with a twist

A new twist on the charity drive is coming: Penny Wars.

Associated Student Body (ASB) will place donation boxes in all classrooms, where students from each fourth period class can donate money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The drive will last through Friday March 20.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society is an organization that helps people with those diseases by providing funding for research to find cures and treatments.

Students can put any kind of money into the boxes each day.

Here comes the twist.

"We will be assigning a positive and negative component to the war," said ASB advisor Jacob Ferrin.

Different monetary values may result in either negative or positive points.

"For example, a penny would be worth one point, a quarter might be negative four points," Ferrin said.

Students will be able to put in any amount into their classroom boxes in order to collect points.

Now, this is where the war starts.

"You can go and sabotage the other classes," Mr. Ferrin said. "The name itself is pushing the Penny Wars aspect of it."

Students are allowed to put money other than pennies in other classrooms, in order to try to make them lose their chance of getting a prize.

The grand prize for the fourth period with the highest point total will be a pizza party. **• PAMELA SERRANO**



No small feat: A recognition of female achievers around the world

March is the month dedicated to appreciating and acknowledging the impact women have made in the past and today.

The celebration of women's history began with a single day, International Women's Day, which then evolved into

National Women's History week in 1980.

After being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, Congress officially proclaimed this month as "Women's History Month" in 1987.

Women have made significant changes in history, such as abolitionists like Harriet Tubman, or authors like Anne Frank.

"I think it's important that we uplift the stories of all women, especially those belonging to marginalized groups instead of focusing solely on white/European women, which I feel Women's History Month generally focuses on," says senior Caitlin O'Neil.

While junior Cristal Ludena appreci-

ates the celebration of women's impacts in history, she wishes "we didn't have to celebrate basic human rights that should have been entitled to them long ago."

To revere women's capabilities and talents, here are women from all over the globe who have made huge impacts in society. • **SANDRA SANCHEZ**



DOLORES HUERTA

is a Mexican American who fought for economic conditions for farm workers. She was also a civil rights activist who stood up for discrimination. Till this day she continues to fight for workers rights, immigrants and women.



MAYA ANGELOU

was an American poet who, through her writing, encouraged the Black community in America to fight for civil rights.



ADA LOVELACE

was a mathematician who was known for her work on the Analytical Engine, the first computer. This led her to be one of the first computer programmers.



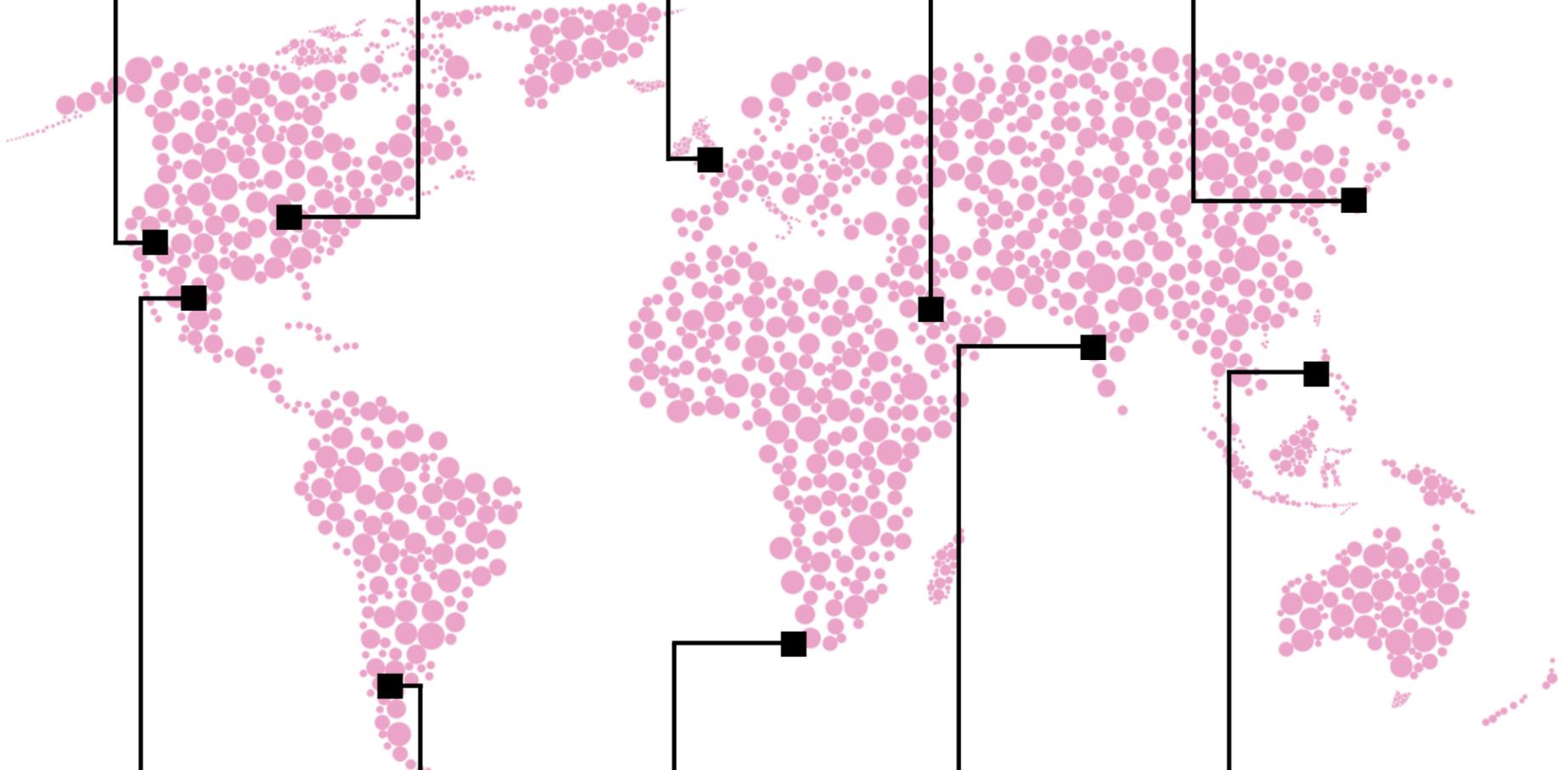
HAIFAA AL MANSOUR

is known to be the first female filmmaker in her country who, while being very controversial, is considered one of the best in Saudi Arabia.



YAYOI KUSAMA

is an internationally acclaimed artist from Japan. She works in different media but is most famous for performance and installation art. She is currently the most expensive living artist, with one of her artworks selling for \$7.2 million in 2015.



SELENA QUINTANILLA

is a very respected icon in Mexico. She was a Mexican-American singer. She continues to influence the Spanish community with her legacy.



ISABEL PERON

was the President of Argentina from 1974-1976. She was the first female to serve as President in a South American country.



PRUDENCE MABELE

A South African activist who helped raise awareness for individuals living with HIV/AIDS in her country by revealing her own diagnosis. She also advocates for women and children's rights.



RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

was made the first health minister of India in 1947. She was a women's activist and politician associated with the Indian Independence Movement during British colonization.



CORAZON AQUINO

was the first female President of the Philippines. She helped restore the country after the authoritarian ruler Ferdinand Marcos.





DOUBLE (and quadruple) TROUBLE

By **ANDREA HERNANDEZ & ESTEFANIA LOPEZ**
THE MIRROR STAFF

Siblings steal your clothes, tell on you and fight with you, but at the end of the day, they can be your greatest friend.

After all, it's nice to have a friend throughout your life, especially if you were born at the same time.

Hayley Simpson and her other three siblings were born at the same time, making them quadruplets.

Hayley shared her mother's womb with her two sisters, Ella and Emma and her brother, Jordan.

The quadruplets are fraternal, which means they were the result of four different eggs that were fertilized individually. They are not identical.

Quadruplets are extremely unusual. According to the National Institutes of Health, they generally occur in only one out of 677,000 births. In 2018, there were 471,500 live births in California.

Home-schooled when they were younger, the Simpsons were enrolled in middle school to pursue their different interests. Hayley is a freshman at Van Nuys, while her two other sisters attend Champs Charter High School and her brother attends James Monroe High School.

Even though it is such a rare occurrence, Hayley thinks that her childhood was pretty uneventful.

"It was fun and you always had someone to be with," she said. "I consider my siblings to be the friends that I will always have."

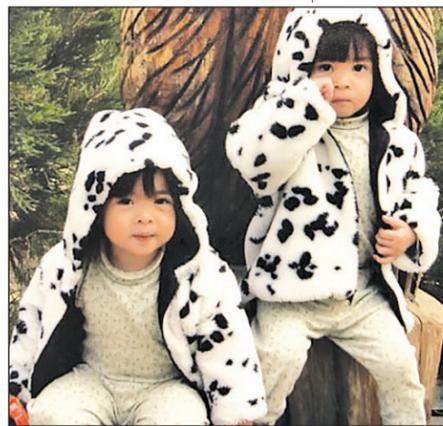
For Hayley, having many siblings is rewarding. She said, "I like having siblings my age because they are able to understand what I am going through since they are going through it too."

Twins share similar experiences, just in a more intimate way.

"It's another friend you can seek help with or relate with," said Stella Gonzalez, a junior, about her fraternal twin Sophia.

"You can always count on your sibling when you need something," Stella said. "And you always know that you won't be walking in alone on anything because we're the same age."

Like Sophia and Stella, fraternal twins Lilit Ohanian, treasurer of Senior Board, and John Ohanian, the vice-pres-



TWINNING Stella (L) and Sophia Gonzalez above, and John and Lilit Ohanian, right.

ident of ASB (Associated Student Body), feel like they can depend on one another in and outside of school.

Lilit expressed that at school, they can benefit from each other. They enjoy attending the same school, having competitions and even working together among the classes that they share.

"I like having my twin at school because if my day gets bad I know I'm not alone and I can count on him to be there," said Lilit.

The twins do many things together, including going to the same events and sharing the same friend groups. Generally, if one does something, the other does too.

Taking turns to chauffeur one another to school and back home is also a daily part of the Ohanian's routine.

Both the Gonzalez twins and the Ohanian twins share the advantages of being able to help each other with schoolwork since they're in the same grade.

"We can study together," said Lilit. "And when we are confused about homework, we just ask each other for help. For example, he [John] is a reliable partner during Ms. [Kristina] Saakyan's quizzes," she said.

For science teacher Ms. Diana Fuhrman, raising twins means double the laughter,



double the frowns and double the difficulty.

"I got two beautiful babies for the price of one!" Ms. Fuhrman said. "They're great, smart, funny kids who probably have a stranger, more unusual bond than most since they shared a womb. Maybe there's some deeper connection most of us never had as siblings."

However, twins or quadruplets aren't all fun and laughter.

Although being with her siblings everyday has its advantages, Hayley occasionally has difficulty finding time for herself. "Sometimes it was like you could never be left alone," she said.

It was also difficult for her mother and father to equally divide their attention between the four of them.

Same for the Ohanian twins. Their father was overwhelmed at times with the double duty of taking care of two toddlers.

"One time when my dad was getting us ready in the morning for preschool, he realized it was silent in the house," Lilit said. "Apparently when you have two little kids, silence isn't a good sign so he panicked and



IDENTICAL Ms. Diana Fuhrman's twin sons Benjamin (L) and Frederick (R).

found us in the bathroom. John was rolling toilet paper into the toilet and I was holding down the handle and we basically flooded our bathroom and got soaking wet."

The problem for Stella and Sofia is that they are often mixed up, even though they are not identical. Sometimes they can feel as though they've lost their individualism.

"We are each our own person and I think it's important to understand that," Stella said.

As an avid people observer, even Ms. Fuhrman has noticed that her twin fraternal boys don't have clashing identities.

The Ohanian twins don't experience clashing identities as frequently because they are different genders, but they still have their fair share of difficulties.

With almost everything they do, they have to do together, even to the point of dragging the other into doing something they don't enjoy doing, like sharing birthdays.

The same holds true for the Gonzalez twins. "With being so close, we often get scolded for the same things and sometimes that means if one of us gets in trouble, we both technically get in trouble," Stella said.

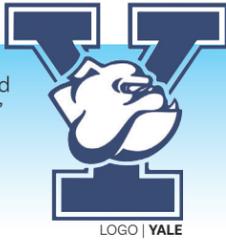
A downside to having and raising twin boys for Ms. Fuhrman is that expenses double. "It's a lot more money," she said. "There are a lot more dental bills now that they're older, a lot more money for clothes and food. A lot more money for everything."

But in the end, having twins, triplets or quadruplets can also be a source of joy.

"People were so excited when they saw them, you could see it in their faces and hear it in their voices," Ms. Fuhrman said. "Their eyes would light up and their voices got higher. Twins have been a lot of work but it's been a great, unexpected delight."



QUAD KIDDIES Fraternal siblings (L to R) Emma, Hayley, Ella and Jordan Simpson.



BILINGUAL+ Speaking in 43 tongues

Language is a key to understanding other cultures. Having an extremely diverse student body, the campus is a microcosm of Los Angeles, teeming with people who bring with them their rich cultures and a multitude of different languages. Many students are bilingual or multilingual, speaking multiple languages aside from English. Of the 7,000 languages spoken around the world, students and staff speak in a staggering 43 different tongues. Here are some student stories:



Csarina Jarencio

"I speak the Filipino dialect Tagalog. I was born in the Philippines and this is my first language. I moved to the United States when I was 11-years-old and speaking my language serves as a reminder of my story and where I came from. Speaking Tagalog helps me preserve my culture and show my pride in being a Filipino."

Emma Salehi

"My second spoken language is Farsi which is spoken in Iran. I learned Farsi when I was very young and I use it to communicate with my Iranian family members. Speaking Farsi helps me break down any language barriers and openly communicate with my family members from Iran. A large number of people speak Farsi in California, making it a useful language for where I live."



Dmitri Capitana

"I speak three languages: my first is Romanian, my second is Russian and my third is English. I was born in Moldova and moved to the United States later on. I've really always known these languages and speaking them has been interesting because I can speak to more people. I can even use the languages to speak about people in front of them without them knowing. With my family at home I speak Russian for the most part."

Luz Parada

"My first language is Spanish and my second language is English. I learned Spanish before I can remember when I was super young. I was born in Venezuela and moved to the United States when I was 11. It's really cool speaking these languages because I can help teach my parents English. I can speak with people who speak Spanish and English, which opens more doors of communication."



Sevak Harutyunyan

"I speak Armenian, Turkish and English. I have spoken all three languages for as long as I can remember. I was born in Glendale where there is a large community of Armenian people. Speaking these languages has affected my life in the way that I get to be part of and communicate with people from different communities and countries."

Mark Ro

"I speak English and Korean. Korean is my second language and I learned it from a very young age before I can even remember. I mainly speak English but I speak Korean at home. Learning Korean let me communicate with my family because most of them live in Korea. Also, by knowing English I'm able to help my mom with money issues, if they need her to call I can help."



Raine Torres

I speak Japanese and English fluently. Because I'm mixed people don't usually expect me to speak Japanese and I used to be really bothered by it because people didn't see me as Asian since I am half black and half Japanese, but now I just find it funny. My mom taught me English and Japanese together from when I was little. I have gone to Japan once or twice every year for usually a month or 3 months during summer and winter and attend their public schools during break. By being bilingual I could meet a lot more people, even though there's not that many people who speak Japanese in my community I can speak with tourists. I'm able to engage and relate to more people.

Tayeba Chowdhury

I speak English and Bengali. I was born in Bangladesh and went to school there until the first grade. It's definitely helpful to know two languages. It helps when I'm speaking with my parent's friends or with relatives visiting from Bangladesh. It's also helpful because I travel to Bangladesh a lot and being fluent in both allows me to speak both very easily with people and with my Bengali friends, we sometimes talk in Bengali when we want to talk about a private matter that we don't want other people to interpret." • COMPILED BY JULIA PFAU



IVY BOUND? Finishing up the last of her 20 AP classes and final semester, Luciana Soria-Robles is considering a possible future at Yale, where she has been accepted as a freshman.

THE MIRROR | PJ RATTAPITAK

From the hallways of Van Nuys to the corridors of YALE

By ANI TUTUNJYAN
THE MIRROR NEWS EDITOR

From answering buzzer questions about the chemical makeup of Cu₂O to participating in women's marches, Luciana Soria-Robles really does it all.

Well maybe not all, but she checked all the right boxes for the 2020 Yale admissions staff.

"The day before I found out, I received an email from my admissions officer requesting a phone call in 'regards to my application to Yale,'" said Soria-Robles. "She called me the next day and opened with 'Welcome to the Yale Class of 2024.'"

Her eyes filled with tears as she sat in her room in disbelief. After escaping her deep gaze, she ran to her mother's room to tell her the news.

"I told her. We teared up."

However, Soria-Robles did not get here overnight. In fact, she spent many nights up, well past sunset and under the covers just before sunrise.

She was juggling between Advanced Placement (AP) courses, school clubs and social life.

"I've been president of my women empowerment club called Dream It Be It for two years now. I created another club in freshman year called Relay for Life and this year I am Co-Captain of the Science Olympiad team," she said. "Throughout these four years, I've taken 20 [AP classes] overall, and with the tests this year, I'll have taken 21 [AP] exams."

Soria-Robles believes that the school provided numerous opportunities and flexibility in taking AP classes and joining and creating clubs.

"I am thankful for everything Van Nuys has provided me with."

Although she finds these resources useful, she believes it is what a student chooses to do with

these resources that makes a difference.

"There's a saying my friend would always tell me that was essentially: 'The mouth that doesn't ask for food doesn't get fed,'" Soria-Robles said. "In other words, if you never ask for something, there's no way you're going to get it. I do think any program from any school is like that, if you're willing to ask for what you want, you'll be able to achieve a lot of things and open opportunities for yourself."

She considers transparency and honesty as the best way to stand out in a large application pool.

"I did my best to make sure that my personal statement created a vivid image and representation of my life," she said. "I wanted them to see how I surpassed many struggles and obstacles and how what I learned from them would help me thrive in their college."

Soria-Robles achieved this by showing her passions and how she became involved in them throughout her life.

"Towards the end of my interview, I remember I mentioned that I was passionate about feminism. My interviewer's first reaction, 'Oh! That makes so much sense.' I think that was the best example of how everything in my application, extracurriculars and values kind of fit all together."

Although Soria-Robles has not committed to Yale, she plans to pursue a major that will allow her to be a voice for underrepresented communities in education and immigration.

She anticipates finding new opportunities in a private institution like Yale from internships to study abroad programs.

"You can get a great education anywhere, but for me this extra support was something I was really looking for."

PRIVACY & SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

THEY WANT YOUR DATA

Are you safe from the dangers of the internet?

By PILAR SIMS
THE MIRROR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With the advent of new technology, people now have the ability to do countless things that were once seemingly impossible.

We are able to connect with anyone and everyone anywhere, search up any information and look and shop for things we need online, all without having to leave your seat. Technology, however, has a downside.

With 58.7 percent of the global population having access to the internet as of December 2019, according to data from the United Nations Population Division, multiple cases of leaking and selling of individuals' private information have been reported.

Despite these incidents, there are no modern laws that go far enough to thoroughly protect an individual's right to privacy, making it easy for others to access public information, such as court records, tax records, property ownership information, lien information or voter registration details.

Governments and corporations also use outdated privacy laws to keep tabs on you and collect data about your online activities.

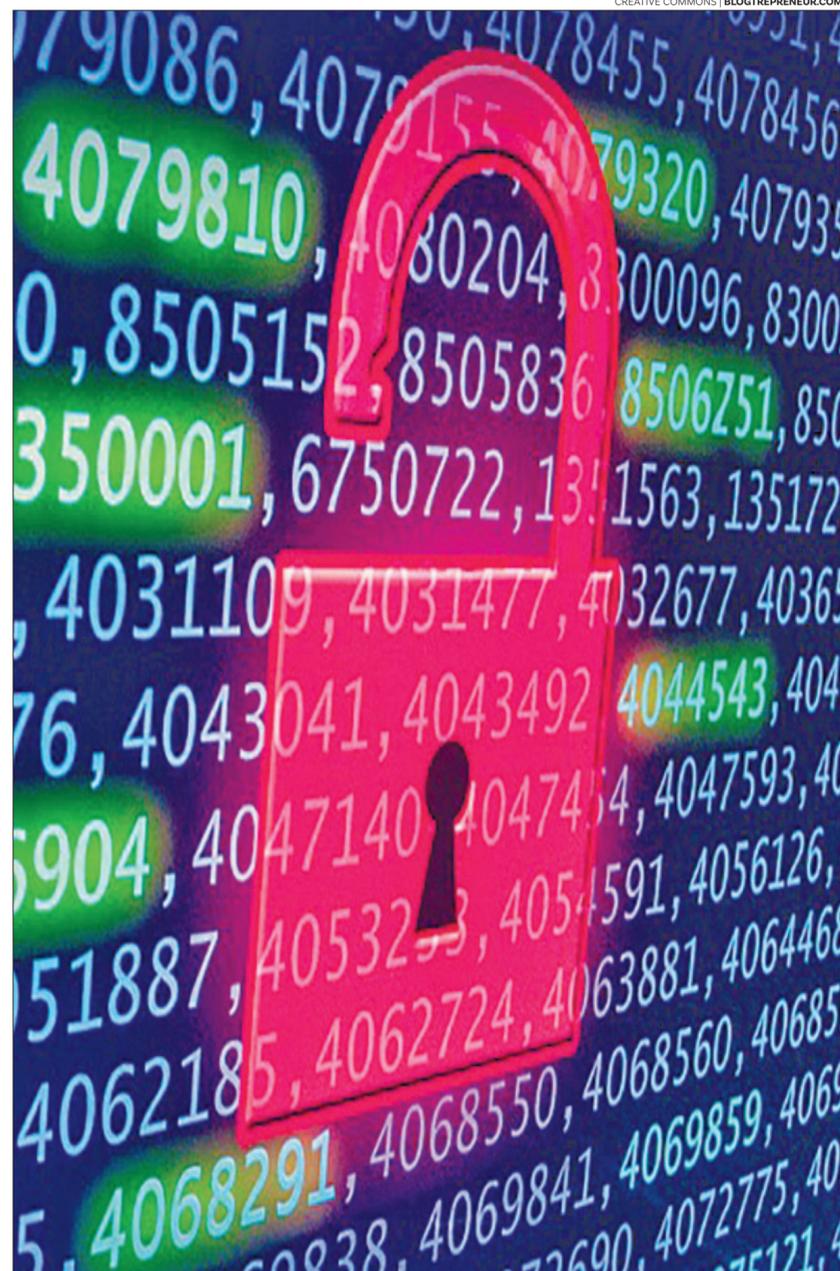
Edward Snowden, a former CIA employee, became a household name in June 2013 after downloading up to 1.7 million files about the National Security Agency's (NSA) surveillance of Americans' online and phone communications.

Snowden, after fleeing to Russia, leaked highly confidential information containing about 200,000 classified documents that revealed a top-secret court order that allowed the NSA to collect telephone records from millions of Verizon customers.

Through these documents, it was also revealed that the NSA was collecting data from companies like Google and Facebook. The NSA was also caught spying on the calls, emails and text messages of Americans and their overseas contacts through a surveillance program code named "Prism" that the agency used to collect information from internet companies.

But most people don't seem too worried. A Pew Research Center study discovered that only 17 percent of Americans described themselves as "very concerned" about the surveillance of U.S. citizens' data and electronic communications by the government. Thirty-five percent of Americans said that they were "somewhat concerned," while 33 percent were "not very concerned" and 13 percent said that they were "not at all" concerned.

Strikingly enough, most Americans believe it is okay for the U.S. government to monitor others such as foreign leaders, American leaders and foreign citizens,



FINANCIAL LOSSES The chance of experiencing a data breach within two years has increased to 29.6 percent, as many companies try to rebuild trust with the public for sharing data with the government.

despite how 57 percent of Americans deemed it "unacceptable" for the government to monitor the communications of U.S. citizens.

After being exposed by Snowden, not only the government faced issues, but so did companies that appeared in the leaked documents.

In attempt to rebuild trust between the public and these companies, several businesses such as Apple, Microsoft and Yahoo entered legal battles with the U.S. government, urging it to reveal more about the volume of surveillance and to reform surveillance laws.

Six years after the Snowden leaks, Americans are still on edge about digital surveillance, with 7 in 10 Americans feeling that their personal information is less secure than it was.

And it is.

In 2017 Equifax, a credit bureau, declared that a data breach exposed the names, home addresses, phone numbers, date of births, social security and driver's license numbers of millions of people. In addition, 209,000 consumer credit card numbers were leaked.

More than 40 percent of the U.S. population, or 143 million Americans, were affected by the breach — even individuals who never did direct business with Equifax.

Despite knowing about the breach in July 2017, the company waited over a month to disclose the breach to the public.

Other companies have been caught up in private data breaches, including Facebook, the largest social media platform, and retail giant Target.

Social media makes it easier for information to be stolen, according to Tech Services' Abi Flores. "Through the obvious Facebook stuff like your information, they can try to see what other websites you are accessing, see if they can pull information from those sites as well," he said.

Facebook has a long history of being involved in several data scandals, the most notorious scandal involving Cambridge Analytica, a British political consulting firm hired by Republicans to mine data for the Trump Campaign in the 2016 election campaign.

In 2018 Whistleblower Christopher Wylie, a Cambridge Analytica employee, told the public that 50 million Facebook profiles were being harvested for political advertising purposes without the user's consent and with Facebook's knowledge.

Though Facebook eventually stopped Cambridge Analytica's access to its platform, the company had been aware of the firm's harvesting of information for two years without disclosing any of this information to the general public and its users.

Following this, Facebook admitted that tens of thousands of Instagram users' passwords were being stored, starting as early as 2012. Then, a Facebook employee was able to pull information containing 419 million users phone numbers, Facebook IDs, genders and countries from a Facebook database that wasn't password-protected.

Facebook may be the worst of the bad actors. The company seems to have few qualms about sharing individuals' information with third party apps as well.

Two years ago Facebook granted Netflix, Spotify and the Royal Bank of Canada the ability to read and even delete 70 million user's private messages. Facebook violated its own end-user agreement when the company let developers access the private photos of 6.8 million people in the same year.

"I think social media plays a huge role on the leaking of students information because they spend more time on it," said Mr. Charles Wilken, the Technology Coordinator.

For all of these invasions of user privacy, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg hasn't faced many consequences other than fines and losing the trust of many users around the world. The social networking site easily dwarfs other competitors with an estimated 1.69 billion current users.

Online security breaches are one example of how personal data can end up in unexpected places, leaving data owners without any control.

Not a lot can be done about this. "Most of the other stuff is technical so it's out of the users hands to be able to manage," said Flores.

But users can control how much of their personal data gets exposed to the internet.

Given the privilege to post, comment on and share personal content, oversharing may be tempting or even unintentional. Nonetheless posts could possibly be used against you in the future.

"The problem with social media is people forgetting that whatever is put out there is always out there," said Mr. Wilken. "It never disappears, someone is always recording it."

Posting updates about your location, friends and family or relationship status and what you're up to may seem innocent, the public display of this information can pose a huge threat to privacy and even life.

"Try not to post sensitive information, facebook information, family photos," Mr. Flores suggested. "I know a lot of people like to post them on Facebook but all it takes is for someone to see them through your page and get all that info, they can spoof other users as well."

Not all posting is a threat to personal life though. With proper precautions, social media can be the safe connection it was envisioned.

"It's really on the user themselves to make sure that what they put out there isn't sensitive information. It is not too hard if people really try," said Flores.

YOU'RE BEING WATCHED

For safety's sake: Facial recognition technology is coming to schools

By KAYLA LEE & PILAR SIMS
THE MIRROR EDITOR-IN-CHIEFS

Your doorbell is watching you. Your computer is watching you. Your ATM is watching you. Starbucks is watching you. LAPD is watching you.

Cameras are everywhere. They're on street corners, in banks, in supermarkets and coffee shops. They've become a fact of life. According to Digital Trends, the average person in the U.S. is on camera around 75 times a day.

Most people are familiar with artificial intelligence (AI) technology through Apple's personal assistant Siri on phones and computers, and Google's smart hub or Amazon's Alexa device. As AI becomes more advanced, it has more uses. Now, it is increasingly used for policing, making it easier to catch wrongdoers and solve crimes.

Unlike DNA evidence for identification, which is costly and can take a laboratory as long as 14 days to produce, facial recognition provides an easier method once a system is installed. Rather than using it for high-profile cases, law enforcement uses it to solve routine crimes or quickly identify suspicious-looking people.

The process of facial recognition, called one-to-one searches, is quite simple. First, police obtain the image of a crime suspect from surveillance video. Then, investigators enter a screenshot of that image into facial recognition software. The program will produce a list of potential matches from the database of mugshots, driver's licenses or other photos, determined by how similar the algorithm thinks they are. Lastly, investigators can scroll through the results to identify a likely match to be confirmed through additional police work.

While AI surveillance technology has been praised for its advanced method of catching criminals, it still has its flaws. According to a study by the Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law, as many as one in four police departments across the U.S. can access facial recognition and that its use is completely unregulated.

52 agencies were reported using face recognition, however warrants were not required for its use from any agency, while in some cases, agencies even allowed the use of face recognition whether or not the officer suspected someone of committing a crime to locate them. Yet, the Constitution is supposed to protect citizens from unwarranted government searches stated in the Fourth Amendment.

More than 117 million American adults are in law enforcement face recognition databases as of 2016 though.

Cities Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco in California, the city of Somerville in Massachusetts and the town of Brookline have already taken action against the use of face recognition, with the ban of governments use of it within the communities.

Facial recognition could potentially play a huge role in combating the already declining crime rate, but the new technology concerns citizens on its accuracy, being that the system is made from biased humans, the data is biased. There is a huge risk that could result from one faulty match.

As the use of the database continues to increase, the threat it could bring to people of color does as well.

Though the system is said to be unbiased in terms of race, ethnicity and age, a 2019 federal study reported that facial recognition algorithms wrongly identified Black and Asian people 100 times more than white individuals. Further discrediting the database's ability, the system had the highest false-positive rate with Native Americans more than any other ethnicities and African American were falsely identified the most in one-to-one searches.

Worst of all, Asians, African Americans, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders were all misidentified in these searches. Children and the elderly didn't have accuracy either, being misidentified quite frequently too. The database had the highest accuracy rates among middle-aged white men.

Although imperfect, facial recognition is still a powerful tool to use, with it becoming increasingly popular in the past several years. The technology has been

CREATIVE COMMONS | BENOIT PRIEUR



OUT IN THE OPEN There are an estimated 30 million surveillance cameras in the U.S. watching you.

used everywhere from airports or venues to shopping centers. More recently, it has moved into a new front: schools, including Van Nuys High School, in an attempt to bar crimes from occurring on campus.

With the increase in gun violence at schools and the potential threat students face, Principal Yolanda Gardea has plans to upgrade the school's spotty surveillance cameras, having already purchased a state-of-the-art system that employs the latest in high-tech facial recognition. "We are looking into getting new cameras all over the place. The ones that we have now are 20+ years old and they don't work very well. They are black and white, and very fuzzy," she said.

Currently a new surveillance camera is installed at the front of the school, overseeing all activities encompassing Cedros Avenue, but is only in the testing phase for future use. "I've talked to groups of parents and teachers, and we are going to invest. This new one here is just a sample so we can see how they work, and next year we will probably be putting about 150 cameras all over the place," Principal Gardea said.

Administrators will be able to identify students by keyword search, for instance typing in red shirt and a time index, and the system will be able to pull up any matching video. They will also be able to match existing student database photos to the recorded video. The hits that come up will potentially allow them to identify anyone on campus. "The cameras have facial recognition, so if we were to put your photo in there [in the system] and you were walking around, it would scan all the cameras and find you," she said.

The use of facial recognition technology inside of schools brings up privacy concerns as for where the cameras will be deployed, but Principal Gardea has assured that they will not stray from its intended purpose. "The reason for the cameras are for intruders, or active shooters," she expressed. "It's more for safety, not to take away privacy. It won't be in classrooms or bathrooms, just hallways and out the perimeter."

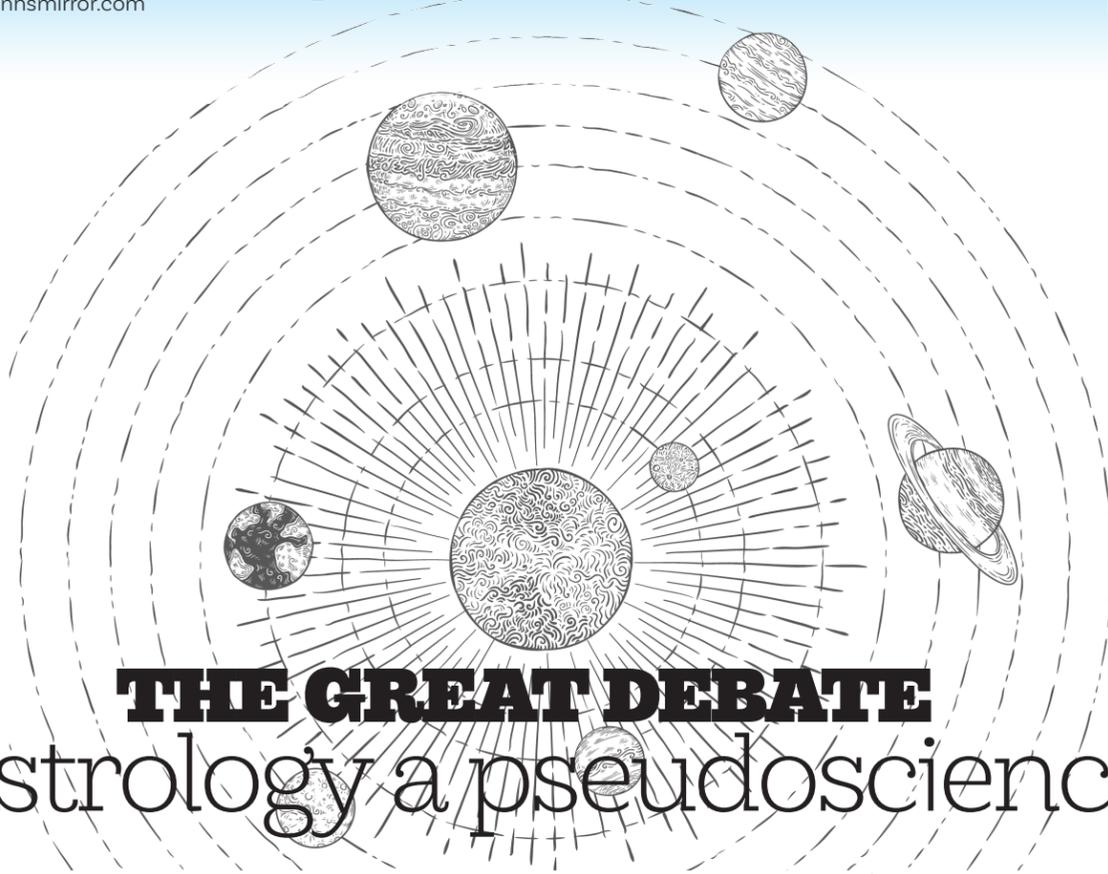
As for whether or not schools are able to install cameras on the campus, the answer is yes, they can. "Everywhere you go now, you're being watched. Every restaurant, store, when you're walking down the street, there's cameras everywhere. So now we really don't have any privacy," she said.

As the technology continues to become a norm inside schools across the country, they will be used to make students feel safe and secure within the walls of their classrooms.

"We cannot be everywhere at the same time, and anything that we can do to help us keep everybody safe is something we feel is an important thing to do," Principal Gardea said.

The 13th sign

The zodiac originally had 13 signs, but the Babylonians used a 12-month calendar so they dropped serpent-bearer Ophiuchus. SOURCE: CARTOON NETWORK



THE GREAT DEBATE

Is astrology a pseudoscience?

YES: “Stop finding comfort in the false hope of horoscopes.”



RUBEN COCILION

With the growing popularity of horoscopes, what your zodiac sign is, what it means and what your birth sign is, I’ve come to wonder if any of it is valid or real in any way.

Horoscopes are the forecast of someone’s future based on the positions of the stars and planets at the time of their birth. Your zodiac or astrological sign is based on the month and date you were born.

How can the month you were born have any indication of what type of person you will be?

The answer is it can’t.

It’s amusing how astrology supporters believe their sign can predict their character and behavior.

Horoscopes are nothing more than a form of entertainment and fantasy. People

can read them and enjoy them, but they are nothing more than superstition. But people won’t let them go. There is even a professional association: the American Federation of Astrologers. Founded in 1938, the group certifies astrologers so that they can go out into the world to interpret birth charts.

Believing in horoscopes and the stereotypes of birth signs is equivalent to believing in magic. Astrology may be an ancient art, but it is a pseudoscience. It pretends to be a science, but it has no basis in science or even in reality.

In 1948, psychologist Bertram Forer conducted an experiment in which he gave his students a personality test. After completion each student was given an analysis of their test that was said to be “unique.” In reality, every student received the same analysis and were asked to rate the accuracy of the analysis on a scale from 0 to 5. On average, the students found the analysis to be 85 percent accurate.

The concept of subjective validation — the belief that two unrelated events are related because they are expected to be — was proven through this experiment. The same concept applies. Even if horoscopes and astrology stereotypes are inaccurate, believers choose to believe that they are.

Believers desperately turn to astrology for hope and answers during troubling

the planets and stars during your birth time. Apps such as Co-star and The Pattern tailor your daily horoscope based on your birth chart which uses your name, birth date, birth time and location.

Astrology’s popularity has been on the rise since it was embraced by the “Free Love” movement of the ‘60s and ‘70s. During this time, a growing interest in spirituality in general combined with a rejection of organized religion by young people promoted being in touch with the universe. Astrology provided a way to do this.

Astrology is classified as a pseudoscience today, but this doesn’t take away from its legitimacy. While many people discredit claims made by astrologists, it is not fair to shut astrology down so quickly. Astrologers have been studying the relationship between people and the universe for thousands of years, starting with the Babylonians in around 3000 B.C.

SHUTTERSTOCK | TARTILA

times. If they’re having a bad day, their daily horoscope can convince them that things will improve. Millennials, ages 18 to 33, and Gen-Xers, ages 34 to 47, report the highest stress levels, with adults 40 and under being the least religious generations. Both groups often turn to astrology to provide guidance and comfort to combat the stress they face.

Astrology has also been used to justify immoral behavior. Toxic personal traits are excused by some believers who may say something along the lines of “It’s because I’m a (insert zodiac sign here).” Instead of choosing to correct offending behavior, they blame it on their zodiac sign, which is ignorant — and annoying. Instead, take accountability for poor choices and bad behavior instead of blaming it on planets and their alignments.

Although it’s true that astrology can be entertaining, there are limits to how much we should allow it to influence our lives. If your daily horoscope makes or breaks your day, or you choose your partners or friends based on their zodiac signs, you’ve exceeded those limits.

I’m able to see past the games and gimmicks of astrology and you can too. Stop finding comfort in the false hope of horoscopes. Stop following the trend of believing what you want to hear.

Life doesn’t always meet our expectations and it shouldn’t be blamed on stars.

What’s more, most people have experienced a moment themselves where an accurate horoscope that corresponded to what was going on in their lives. In a Twitter poll I conducted, 73 percent of participants said they were true believers, while the remaining 27 percent were skeptical. Most of those who believe in astrology say that usually their horoscopes are extremely accurate.

Having faith in the stars gives believers like me comfort in times of need. It also can provide hope when things seem desperate.

It has helped me understand myself and those around me. It helps us understand how to deal with others and why certain people act the way they do.

Astrology has personally taught me to stop rushing into things. I feel more comfortable knowing that life isn’t random. The universe has a plan for all of us.

NO: “Life isn’t random. The universe has a plan for all of us.”



MONICA MAZARIEGOS

Every Monday you can check Cosmopolitan’s Snapchat story for your weekly horoscope, hoping to get a glimpse of what you can expect in your life for the upcoming week.

Similar to a weather forecast, horoscopes determine your current and future circumstances based on the positions of

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Separating the *art* from the *artist*



JIMENA MARTINEZ

The child molestation allegations against R. Kelly's did not stop fans from listening to his music.

Chris Brown admitting to allegedly abusive behavior towards his ex-girlfriend Rihanna did not stop his music sales either.

Notorious B.I.G.'s alleged exploitation of Lil' Kim while she was a minor is overlooked as fans still see him as an icon.

Fame and money do not justify immoral behavior, but we should keep in mind that artists are not much different from any of us. We do not expect each other to be perfect and we should hold artists to the same standard. Artists are humans who make mistakes and with proper remorse, there is a possibility for redemption.

Artists can still be respected and appreciated for their

content but not admired as a person. The idea of separating the artist from the art is possible.

In extreme cases, careers are ruined because of the link between artists and their art. Dixie Chicks' guitarist Natalie Maines is one example where the failure to separate the art from the artist resulted in the downfall of a career. In 2003, Maines expressed her political views about then-

President George W. Bush and got huge backlash. She was trashed by the public and radio stations refused to play the group's music.

After apologizing repeatedly she was still unable to regain all the respect she'd lost. Artists should be allowed to express their opinions just like everyone else can. Freedom of expression is a right we all share. Maines and other artists should not

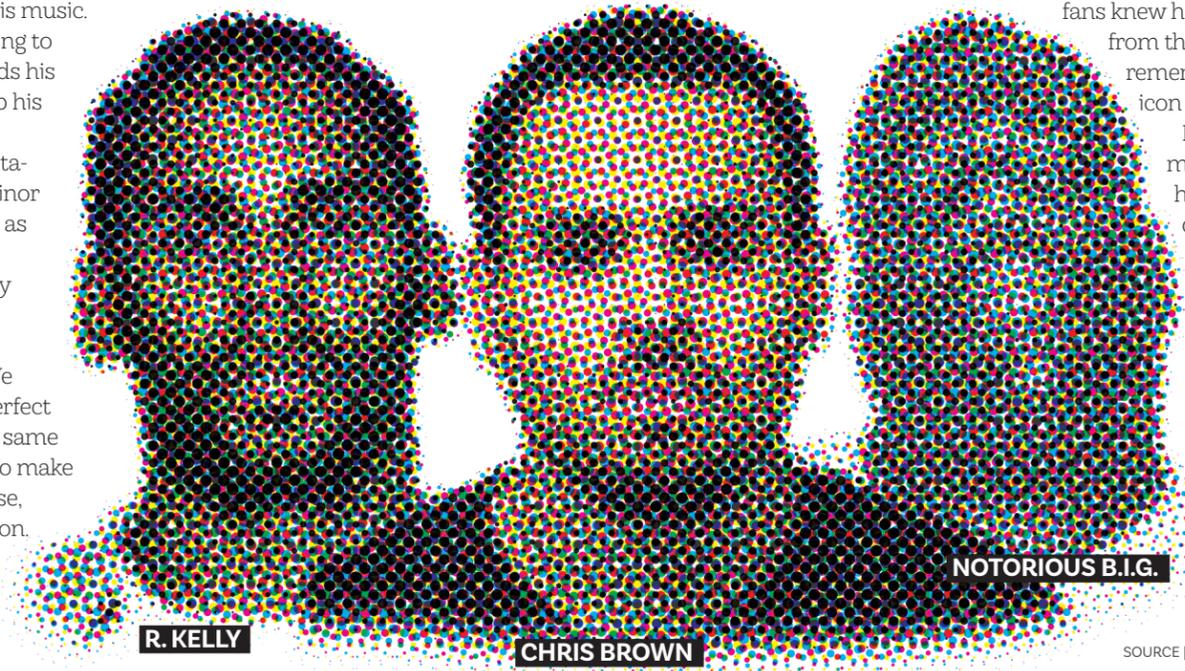
lose their careers or lose respect for their personal opinions.

In Michael Jackson's documentary "Leaving Neverland," two men accused Michael of sexually abusing them as children. The documentary revealed how the singer used his fame to gain the trust of the victims' families in order to get closer to them. But such allegations did not stop fans from listening to his music. Jackson's fans knew how to separate the artist

from their art which is why he is still remembered and thought of as an icon today.

But being an artist does not mean criminal or immoral behavior is justified. Artists should definitely be held accountable for their actions, but shunning them is unnecessary — especially after they've understood their mistake and apologized.

Artists should be judged for their wrongdoings like the rest of us. But that does not automatically mean you should boycott their work because the art they create is different from who they are.



SOURCE | CREATIVE COMMONS

“Fame and money do not justify immoral behavior, but we should keep in mind that artists are not much different from any of us.”

Parents: It's 2020. Stop telling us which races we can date



ADRIANA CONTRERAS

Parents can be overbearing. They encourage us to get good grades, stay out of trouble and even lay down the rules of dating as we get older. They control us and the decisions we make because they want to ensure that we have a bright future. Not wanting to let our parents down, we are sometimes scared to go against their word or stray away from the path they've set for us.

Some teenagers have the freedom to make their own choices but those who are not as fortunate find themselves being cautious with their decisions, fearing the disapproval of their parents.

This is especially true with romantic relationships.

When we are the apple of our parents' eye, we want nothing more than to please them. Most teens

would much rather conceal their relationships instead of being seen as a disappointment who falls short of expectations.

I was raised in a predominantly Hispanic community. My parents encouraged me to bring home a man who is the same race and religion as me when I was old enough to date. Under the impression that their thinking was reasonable and that they had my best interests at heart, I never questioned them.

It wasn't until high school when I realized how wrong my parents' thinking was. The student body is very diverse and school provides

the opportunity to meet people of different backgrounds and ethnicities. High school expanded my cultural awareness.

My dad always tells me things like, "You have to be with Latino man that is hardworking and a 'macho' man."

I realized my peers experience the same thing.

"My dad would tell me I could date as long as it wasn't a Mexican," Cristal Ludena, a student of Peruvian and Mexican descent said. "He would list stereotypes, such as they mistreat women and are very machismo (have a strong sense of masculine pride)."

She ignores her father's comments because she values her partner's personality over his ethnic background.

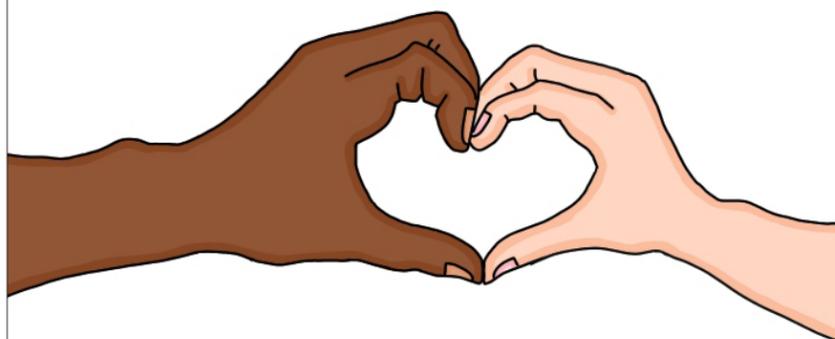
"His judgements won't dictate who I will marry," she said.

"Growing up it was implied that I have to marry a Muslim man to continue to practice Islam and have children who will practice it as well," said Alisha Zaman, a student of Bengali heritage. "My aunt and uncle married outside of our culture and religion and I was constantly told that I 'better not end up like them.'"

Zaman went on to explain that her parents' limited way of thinking have driven her to resent her culture and religion.

Our parents should not pressure us about who we should date because it is outdated and results in us resenting them. When we were younger we may have believed that our parents always knew best, but as we mature and learn from our own experiences, we form our own opinions.

Besides, times have changed. Race, ethnicity, religion and even gender are outdated concepts that should no longer limit who we choose to date.



THE MIRROR | KAYLA LEE

SEVEN SOULS The Bangtan Boys (counterclockwise from top center) Suga, Jungkook, Jimin, RM, J-Hope, Jin and V are dominating chart world-wide with the recent release of "Map of the Soul: 7"

BTS takes a stand

With UNICEF, the group launched a two-year campaign against violence towards children and teens called "Love Myself," raising over \$1.4 million. SOURCE: SEVENTEEN



SOURCE | BIGHIT ENTERTAINMENT

Climbing new heights with BTS
Map of the Soul: 7

By **KAZI MAISHA RAHMAN & ANZHELA HARUTYUNYAN**
THE MIRROR STAFF

The Bangtan Boys, better known as BTS, are back, hitting the charts with a new album after taking a break for almost a year.

The K-Pop boy band dominated global charts with the release of their highly anticipated album, "Map of the Soul: 7" in February. The album consists of 20 songs with five featured songs that were previously released with their 2019 EP.

The album reveals the members' inner struggles and the impacts their fame has on their well-being. Although overwhelmed with conflict along their journey, BTS shares with their fans that it is necessary to move forward.

The "7" that appears on the album's cover is the representation of the number of members and years that they have spent with each other since they debuted in 2013. Some diehard fans are convinced that the "7" in the album's name foreshadows an upcoming album titled "Map of The Soul: Ego" since "7" in Korean is pronounced as "ilgob" which

also sounds like the word for "ego."

Composed mostly of solo tracks, the album appealed to many fans. For senior Jermaine Nacion, who follows the band's work, it was a little bewildering to witness the abundance of seven solo tracks. "The album is definitely different from what I expected because I didn't think they'll have solos from each member like what they did with 'Wings' (the band's 2016 album)," he said.

"My Time" is a solo track by the youngest member of the group, Jungkook. The song is Jungkook's way of telling us how he yearns to live those teenage years he's missed because he joined BTS. "It brought me and many others to tears," fan Ayisha Bushra said.

The highlight track "Black Swan" was inspired by American dancer and choreographer Martha Graham's quote "A dancer dies twice — once when they stop dancing — and this first death is the more painful." The song poetically expresses the struggles that an artist goes through, particularly how art is life and how difficult it is to bid art farewell.

Along with the compelling songwriting, the album is filled with deep messages.

"The lyrics are just so real and beautifully written, and you can easily tell that a lot of thought was put into each verse," Bushra said. "They talk about how they struggle as artists, but they're constantly motivated to push through and not let the hateful criticism of people overtake them because their ARMY are here for them."

Fans have been moved by the group's humbleness and authenticity, despite their growing fame.

Their album creates an intimate connection with ARMY by encapsulating the band's growth over the past seven years. The song "We Are Bulletproof: the Eternal" demonstrates how far they've come. "It's about how they were made fun of before they got big when their fans came along," said Kate Martinez, who thinks the song really hits home. "The entire song is just a poetic question about what makes us so special, and about how we as ARMY changed BTS's lives."

BTS rose to prominence by changing the face of K-Pop itself, as well as the standards for boy bands. In 2018, BTS became the first South Korean boy band to debut an album at number one on the U.S. Bill-

board 200 chart, with "Love Yourself: Tear." They also made YouTube history in 2019 as the biggest debut for a music video with their song "Boy with Luv," featuring singer-songwriter Halsey.

With 46.5 million views in the first 24 hours, the video for "On" is the fifth-biggest YouTube debut ever. The song appears twice on the album — once with the group itself and also as a collaboration remix with Sia, an Australian singer-songwriter. The music video references popular movies, including "Lion King," "Bird Box," "The Maze Runner" and "The Chronicles of Narnia" to visually portray their emotions and struggles.

The album itself had 4.02 million pre-orders and over 2.2 million streams on Spotify within 24 hours of its release. Jimin's solo track, "Filter" which highlights both prejudice and Jimin's wish to present himself to the world in many different ways, set the record as the "Biggest 24 Hour Debut" by a Korean solo on Spotify.

The group's hard work has increasingly gained them worldwide recognition with each new release. In the U.S., the band counts more and more fans, adding to the growing millions worldwide.

A new era of flexible flip Phones

By **MILTON NAJARRO**
THE MIRROR STAFF

Samsung is changing the game with their newly released Galaxy Z Flip. Released in February, the Z Flip is a revolutionary foldable smartphone.

Compared to the Galaxy Fold — Samsung's first folding phone — the Z Flip is a game-changer because of its upgrades. The Fold went on sale last September.

The Fold folds vertically while the Z Flip folds downwards, making it smaller and more compact. The two sides are connected by a stiff hinge that can keep the phone upright, also allowing the user to adjust the angle of the fold. The folded phone creates two separate, usable screens.

One of the most noticeable features is

a miniature screen next to the rear-facing camera, displaying time, weather and notifications from missed calls and messages. When the camera app is opened, it can also be used as a selfie camera and a "viewfinder" to see the picture being taken.

The screen is made out of an ultra-thin glass that has a thickness similar to a strand of hair, allowing it to be flexible enough to fold. To combat damage, Samsung added a protective plastic coating for more durability, but the screen is still extremely fragile. There are no screen protectors that can accommodate the technology. Some users are reporting bubbles and separation of the screen's layers.

Similar to Samsung's past releases, the Z Flip can charge wirelessly through



FLEXY NEW FLIP The radical new phone's screen can fold in half and function as a camera stand.

SOURCE | YOUTUBE

a Qi-certified pad. A fingerprint sensor on the side of the phone allows users to have easy access. The phone closes completely in half providing the benefit a bigger phone while taking up less pocket space.

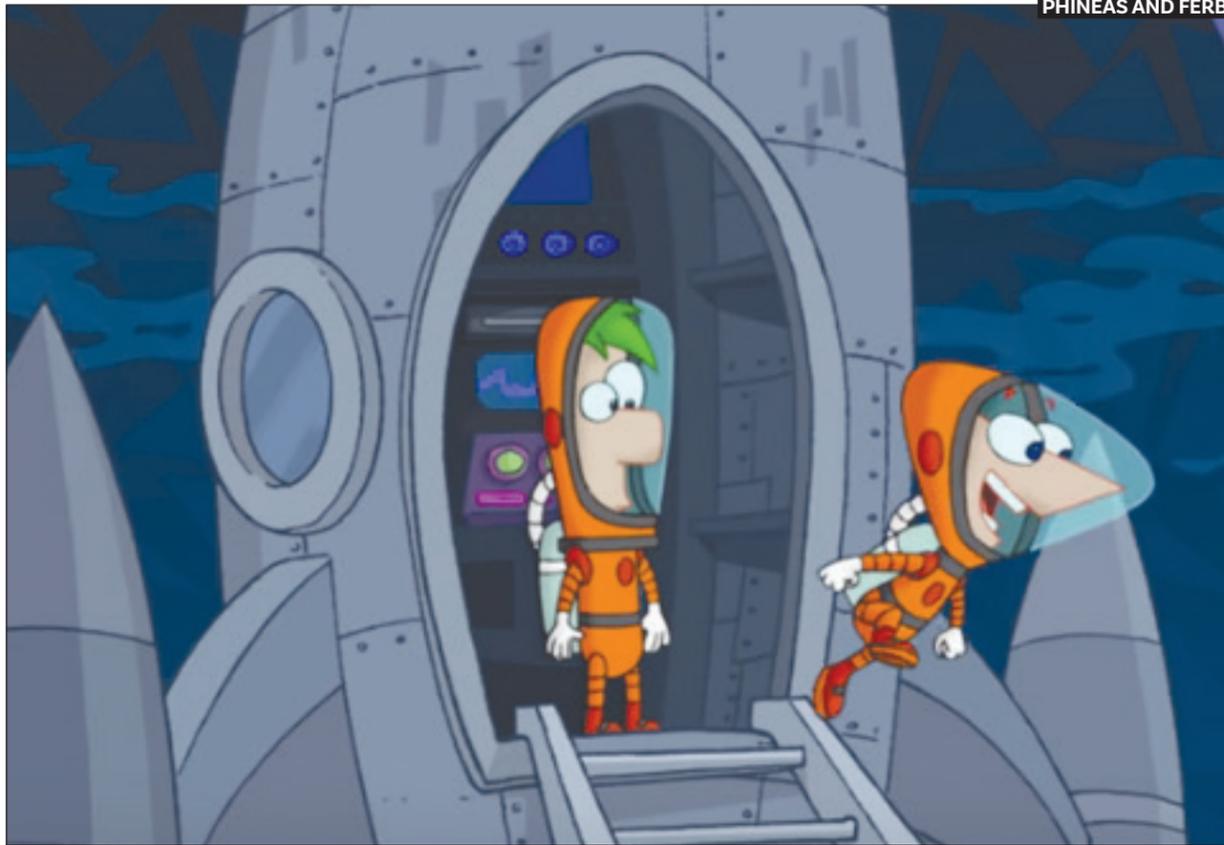
One important feature, the camera, doesn't come close to matching the new iPhone camera. It can smooth out images and blur lines, sometimes creating an unclear photograph.

"I think the phone is a testament to how far technology has progressed in phones,

rather than a phone made for the average consumer, said Gabriel Castillo, a Samsung user. "At \$1000-plus it seems like Samsung is trying to get to the idea of a foldable phone out there rather than putting out a phone that people will most likely use. With the Z Flip's cheaper price, there is no doubt that other companies will try to undercut it."

The Galaxy Z Flip retails for a whopping \$1,380. The phone comes in three colors including mirror black, mirror gold and mirror purple.

CN LOGO | CARTOON NETWORK; PHINEAS AND FERB; KIM POSSIBLE; DEXTER'S LABORATORY; JOHNNY BRAVO | YOUTUBE



PHINEAS AND FERB



KIM POSSIBLE



DEXTER'S LABORATORY



JOHNNY BRAVO

CARTOON CLASSICS

It's always Saturday morning with these Gen-Z favorites

Most children growing up in the '00s remember this feeling: It's Saturday. Your eyes are still heavy but you have that excitement for the weekend. No school. No homework. Just cartoons to start the day! So you jump out of bed and run to the TV, turning it on before even getting breakfast.

For Generation Z — that's anyone born in the first decade of this century — it was shows like "SpongeBob," "The Powerpuff Girls" and the "Justice League" that reminds us of being a kid. Let's take a trip down memory lane and rate a few cartoons most Gen-Z kids watched.

● BEVERLY REGINO & ANAHIT SHARAMATYAN

Johnny Bravo

Confidently prideful and macho, Johnny Bravo, an egoistic 8-year-old, thinks the world revolves around him. With a blonde pompadour, tight-fitting clothes and a voice like Elvis, Bravo goes out day to day trying to woo all the women of his town.

Adorning its bright and colorful animation with many funny jokes, "Johnny Bravo" was a special Cartoon Network show meant for young teenagers. During its 10-year run starting in 1995, it captured the hearts of many of its watchers, even if Bravo himself didn't catch any cartoon womens' hearts. Even though it included questionable innuendo, the show still had charm.

Avatar: The Last Airbender

The Avatar, a master of earth, water, fire and air, was the tie between the four elemental nations. However, young Airbender and Avatar-in-training Aang, ran away and were trapped in ice for 100 years, during which the Fire Nation rose to power. However, after water bender siblings Katara and Sokka discover Aang, his destiny finally comes to fruition: to defeat the Fire Nation and bring peace once and for all.

Airing from 2005 to 2008 on Nickelodeon, "Avatar: The Last Airbender" had become a staple of cartoons mixed with Japanese animation. It gave way to other shows such as "The Dragon Prince," and "Voltron: Legendary Defender." With great lessons, amazing animation and memorable moments, this show is unforgettable and very ahead of its time. Despite being targeted to a young audience, it also reached a mature audience and is a notable cartoon to rewatch.

"What stood out to me the most about 'Avatar: the Last Airbender' was how original the concept was," said "Avatar" fan Cheyenne Heang. "The whole 'putting the elements to life,' was really original and the characters were very complex — they're actually really good and the show is very mature for a kids' show."

He-Man and the Masters of the Universe

"Some say he looks like a masculine, blond Dora. They're not wrong," said fan Daniel Woo. Though an old show, it has had an internet resurgence in recent years with an in-production Netflix reboot of the show. With a shout of "By the Power of

Grayskull!" the catchphrase for kids who grew up with this show, Prince Adam transforms into He-Man, Eternia's protector. Considered as the most powerful man in the universe, he is accompanied by Battle Cat, The Sorceress, Man-At-Arms and Orko, to fight against Skeletor and his forces. From 1983 to 1985, 130 episodes were aired. While most Gen-Z couldn't watch it when it originally aired, many got to experience the show through DVD releases in 2005.

Remembered for its top-notch action, characters and Skeletor's amusing voice, it is also considered as one of the greatest animated shows.

"He-man was the pinnacle of my childhood because it was my main form of entertainment and I also didn't have cable," said Woo. "He amplified what it's like to be a hero. He-man was tactful, merciful, friendly, kind and above all, understanding. He was vibing at a frequency we could relate to."

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

A reboot of the '80s original aired from 2012 to 2017, following four mutant turtles Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael and Michelangelo — who are trained by their sensei. Destined to be heroes, the four learn to rely on each other to learn about their past, while doing this, they are battling with Master Shredder. As the turtles come to the surface of the earth, they get tangled in problems including aliens, robots and scientists as well as confronting the substance that mutated them in the first place. Despite being a spinoff of an original which aired back in 1987, this show was popular and unforgettable.

Phineas and Ferb

Two step brothers, Phineas and Ferb, want to have the best 104 days of their lives. They spend their summer vacation driving their sister insane by turning their backyard into a construction site for all their dangerous inventions definitely not fit for children. In the background, their platypus Perry, a secret agent, foils the plans of Dr. Heinz Doofenshmirtz, an evil scientist.

"Phineas and Ferb is one of the funniest shows ever!" said Gursewak Singh. "There are catchy songs, great plots and really funny characters. There is humor for both kids and adults. It's the type of show you can watch over and over again and it just gets funnier. There are little things you catch each time."

Phineas and Ferb, which originally aired from 2007 to 2015, included adventures and friendships which made it a popular show for '00s children.

Dexter's Laboratory

Originally airing from 1995 until 2003, the show follows the adventures of boy-genius Dexter in his laboratory, who tries to get along with his very strict and crazy parents, who are oblivious of his talents and high IQ. Constantly feuding with his sister DeeDee and competing with his arch-nemesis Mandark, Dexter saves the world with his bizarre inventions.

Scooby-Doo, Where are You!

After only one season, which ended in 1970, "Scooby-Doo, Where are You" was set in California, and features four high school students, Shaggy, Velma, Daphne, Fred and their Great Dane, Scooby. They go

on adventures riding in their Mystery Machine, a '70s Ford Econoline van. One day the engine breaks down, causing the gang to voluntarily investigate the monstrous location that they had ended up at. "Scooby-Doo, Where are You" was a childhood staple worthy of its many reboots.

"I loved Scooby-Doo as a kid because of the dynamic between all the characters," said Scooby fan Wellington Upsill. "There is no single main character and this allowed me to never become bored. I loved the comedic aspect of the show and the goofiness off Scooby and Shaggy."

But Upsill loved the mystery element of the show. "As a kid I always tried to solve the mysteries throughout the show and that always kept me occupied and entertained," he said.

Kim Possible

Featuring the most recognizable animated Disney Channel character from the '00s, this show is still worth a rewatch for any one in high school. Young teens Kim Possible, Ron Stoppable, his adorable pet naked mole rat Rufus and child-genius Wade all work together to stop the plans of mad-scientist, evil genius Dr. Drakken and his sidekick Shego.

The iconic opening line "Call me, Beep Me, if you wanna reach me," has stuck in the minds of many kids who grew up with the Disney Channel.

"Kim is a teenager who saves the world while at the same time, she struggles with real world problems that all teenagers face such as issues with self-esteem, time-management, competitiveness and self-expression," said admirer Haley Balberan. "The show provides many lessons and morals for teens."

AVATAR; HE-MAN; SCOOBY-DOO; TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES | YOUTUBE



AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER



HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE



SCOOBY-DOO, WHERE ARE YOU!



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES



GIRLS SOFTBALL BACK TO BASICS

FROM BASEBALL TO SOFTBALL Joe Avila found success as a baseball coach, winning a championship in 2013. Can he do the same with softball?

By ANDRE RODAS
THE MIRROR SPORTS EDITOR

In the words of professional athlete Drew Brees, “You are either getting better or getting worse, but you are never staying the same.” This is what the upcoming girls softball season is all about. With the addition of a new coach and new athletes, things are going to be different.

The season is right around the corner, officially beginning March 9 but the girls have been preparing since summer.

Varsity player Melissa Guerra is thankful for the addition of their new coach, Joe Avila.

You’ve probably seen Avila on campus maybe manning the front desk at the main entrance. He’s currently the campus aid and can be seen with his trademark sunglasses, piercings and tattoos, he’s hard to miss.

“He has put his time and effort to get us prepared for this upcoming season,” she said.

Coach Avila has a unique perspective on competition. “Whoever stays hungry are the ones that are going to survive. Being an alumni and a former athlete from here, I can say how important this mentality is first hand.”

When it comes to coaching, Avila is not a first timer. He coached varsity baseball with his brother, Alfredo Avila, who is still the baseball coach. Together they went on to win the Division III championship in 2013. Coach Joe has also coached cheer and boys volleyball. The Avila brothers currently have a competition to see which team will have the better record.

As of right now they’re going back to the basics and fundamentals says the softball coach. “Some of them have bad habits that we’re trying to fix.” Practice drills have consisted of infield, outfield, pop ups and picks.

The team is currently rebuilding itself. New additions like junior Rafaela Reyes, a transfer student from Birmingham, will be playing in her first

season for the Wolves.

“The energy here just feels so much better,” Reyes said. “At Birmingham it was a big school — big title — but I wasn’t really happy there. I didn’t feel like I fit in exactly how I do now and I’m really happy I did this change.”

As of right now the team is going back to the basics and fundamentals Coach Joe said. “Some of them have bad habits that we’re trying to fix.”

Senior Jazmin Rosas is the player to look out for. She’s shown great improvement as she went from batting .111 to .500. Not only that, but she was named Player of the Game in a pre-season match against Taft where she went 3-3 with two doubles, one triple, two stolen bases, one RBI and scored two runs. Her coach and teammates are expecting a big season out of her.

The team is working closer together thanks to the structure Coach Joe has introduced, along with his high expectations. “While bonds were

a bit shaky, after that first game I saw a lot of positivity and unity. All team members have tried to help out one another. I think now they notice how important it is to stick together.”

As of right now there is no team captain. He wants everyone to be leaders on the team and grow together. Coach Joe also feels that there isn’t anyone quite ready to take on the role of team captain but “that could change as we progress.”

Last season they finished with an overall record of 6-10 and a league record of 6-6. They finished near the bottom in league but hope to finish at the top this season. The team qualified for the CIFLACS Softball Division II playoffs where they got eliminated in the first round by North Hollywood in a tight game with a final score of 9-8.

Their ultimate goal, according to Coach Joe, is to win a championship in Division II and move up to Division I.

With the help of the girls, he might just do it.

WORD FROM THE CAPTAINS

Kristopher Arrozal
Boys Volleyball

I’m really looking forward to this season as it is my last season here. Being one of the older athletes on this team, and team captain, I’ve had a lot of experience on the court and can really see that these younger kids have the skill that it takes to win.



Hau Nguyen
Boys Tennis

Everyone here has been working really hard behind the scenes. They continue to improve and are all excited to be here and I know we can do big things. We’re family here.



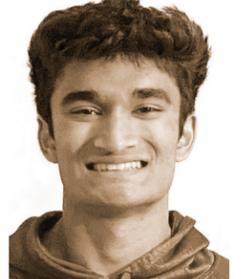
Ruby Dunmore
Girls Soccer

This season was without a doubt the most memorable of my four seasons here. The family dynamic we created helped us grow as a team and lead us to a solid performance, coming out in third place. Although we had our losses, seeing the individual and collective growth made it all worth it.



Mawil Hassan
Swimming

The goal this year is to once again go undefeated, remain league champions and dominate in CIF. Last year’s season was historic and everyone’s been working extremely hard to do even better. We’re one big family here.



Girls basketball surges to playoffs; Eliminated in quarterfinal match

By **ANDRE RODAS**
THE MIRROR SPORTS EDITOR

33-31. That was the final score of an intense quarterfinal battle for the girls basketball team against Eagle Rock High School as they eliminated the Wolves in the Division I CIF LA City Section 2020 Playoffs on Feb. 18.

It was a very painful game, Captain Jennifer Lee said. "Although this game was an end to a chapter, I am confident this game was not an end to a story."

Despite the loss, it was an impressive season all around as the girls finished first in the league, with only one defeat in nine matches by the opponent Lee believes was their toughest — Kennedy High School, which finished the season with a 7-1 overall record.

"Unlike last year, Kennedy's defense came out strong and very tactical. We bumped heads mentality-wise."

The girls also went on to win back-to-back Valley Mission League Championships. Coach Elizabeth Lezama said this was a first-ever tournament achievement for the team.

Last season the girls participated in Division II, winning the

championship and making it to the first round of state playoffs, becoming the first girls basketball team to do so in Van Nuys history.

Thanks to last year's success, the team moved up to Division I this year, making the postseason competition tougher and fiercer.

Despite the new level of intensity, the team never backed down and always remained confident, securing a sixth-seed playoff spot. They played powerhouses such as Westchester [record] and Wilson High School [record] during tournaments and pre-season games in order to get ready for the new competition.

They took down 11th-seed Dorsy High School, their first match up in this year's playoffs, with a 65-37 home win and a spot in the quarterfinals against Eagle Rock.

"Despite the pressure I believe our season went very well as everyone had a united mentality to focus one game at a time," Lee said.

Eagle Rock was the last game for senior Lee, who graduates in the spring. This season she was determined to continue the winning legacy of last year's team.

Looking back, the captain is grateful to her teammates for sticking by her side even when she felt like she could've done a better job.

"I lack various aspects as a per-



son and as a leader," she said.

Three other seniors will be leaving this year's team but Lee remains confident that the program will be able to go far in playoffs next year because every returning player will come back

better than before.

"I do believe the goals for this year were met and I am confident that the girls will work hard once again to achieve a milestone — which is to win a Division I championship."

CAPTAIN IN ACTION

Jennifer Lee (dribbling the ball) against Reseda in a 65-19 blowout win on Jan. 29.

Wrestling: After 3rd place in regionals, it's all about getting better

By **ANDRE RODAS & EDUARDO CAMERENA**
THE MIRROR STAFF

This season was all about improvement for the wrestling team.

Team captain Bryan Merida was able to take fifth place in the 182-lb. weight class at the city tournament and placed second at the DeJohn Tournament held in San Fernando High School. Next year as a senior he plans to do even better.

"My expectations for myself are to make it to city finals and ultimately compete in state."

Merida is happy with the improvement he's seen in his teammates. While he doesn't have anyone particularly in mind, he does think that one group of underclassmen has shown great strides.

"I've noticed a lot of improvement from the freshman that showed up to practice and tournaments. As it's my third year being in wrestling, I was able to see their

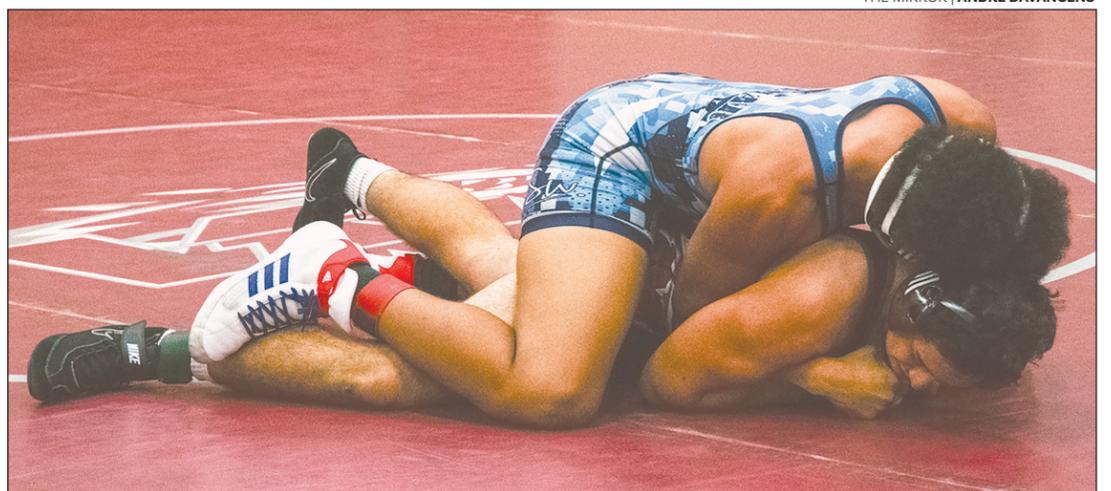
first tournaments and in their last few matches they showed incredible growth as well as in the practice room as they came in ready to win their next match."

Last month they took home fourth place out of the 12 schools that competed in the CIF LA City Section 3 Regional competition. They finished behind third-place winner Palisades, second-place winner Sylmar and first place San Fernando.

"I feel that as a team we have done much better than last year and really continued the momentum we had from the previous year to show great improvement in all our wrestlers," said Merida.

As the next season approaches he hopes more people will join the team as the lack of athletes caused some challenges. This has been an issue since last season.

"Some of our best wrestlers were seniors so losing them definitely hurt, however thanks to them the rest of us were able to



PINNED TO THE GROUND Johnny Limon, pinned by an opponent from Sylmar High School in a tough match on Dec. 12.

grow. They helped us improve in technique and strength-wise."

With his final season quickly approaching, he hopes to meet all his individual and team goals and thanks coaches Ramon Tovar and Arnold Baltodano for their leadership.

"I'd like to say thank you to Ms. [Yolanda] Gardea and Mr.

[Marc] Strassner for always supporting us and believing in our team. We have nine returning athletes who have all improved and who are already back in the room. I'm hoping we can get more boys and girls next year and I'm very proud of what the team has accomplished," said Coach Tovar.



I've noticed a lot of improvement from the freshmen that showed up to practice and tournaments."

BRYAN MERIDA
WRESTLING TEAM CAPTAIN



ULTIMATE OBSESSION

MAXIMUM VELOCITY Max Schmidt has taken Frisbee to the next level.

Combining elements of football, soccer and basketball, Ultimate Frisbee is Max Schmidt's passion

By ANDRE RODAS
THE MIRROR SPORTS EDITOR

Ultimate Frisbee runs through Max Schmidt's veins.

"I've been playing for around six to seven years at this point," Schmidt explains. "I play in a club team, one of two in Los Angeles."

He admits that his mother, Mariana Rodrigues, influenced him to take up the sport. She was a national-level college player at Carleton College, a private liberal arts school in Northfield, Minnesota. The team is widely considered to be one of the best.

Schmidt thinks he inherited her skills.

"I'd consider myself to be pretty good," he said with a smile on his face. "However the team I'm on isn't nationally ranked or anything like that."

Schmidt plays for the Los Angeles Wildfires, a youth ultimate frisbee club. There he's faced off against skilled individuals such as Danny Landesman, who is now playing professionally for the Los Angeles Aviators.

Although Schmidt has played other sports before, nothing really hooked him the way Ultimate Frisbee does.

"Ultimate Frisbee is a good mix of sports. There are elements of football, soccer and even basketball in the game, which is something that I find

so interesting"

People have been taking to open fields to toss frisbees since they were first sold as a toy in 1957 by Wham-O, the company responsible for the Hula Hoop and Water Wiggle. By 1977, over 100 million discs had been sold.

Ultimate Frisbee has been around for 50 years and the creation of it was just sheer luck.

It all started when a young Joel Silver, who has produced huge films such as "The Matrix," "Die Hard" and "Sherlock Holmes," presented the idea of using the popular disc in a team sport to his high school's student council in 1969.

The first teams were formed at Silver's high school in Maplewood, New Jersey. In 1970, Silver, along with two other classmates, came up with the rules that are still used today.

The official rules can be a bit complicated. Games are played on a field very similar to a football field. The offensive team lines up in front of their end zone line, while the defensive team throws the disc to the team on the offensive end. Players cannot run with a disc and have only ten seconds to throw a pass.

When the offense is able to complete a pass on the defensive end, it's a point for them. While the games aren't high scoring, each point is

incredibly important and holds a lot of value.

Games last for 36 minutes and are divided into two 18-minute halves.

It hasn't been all fun for Schmidt and the Wildfires. One of the biggest problems the team faces is getting players to consistently show up for practices and even for games. Schmidt states that a well-prepared team usually has "12-14 players, while we only have 7-9 depending on whether players show up or not."

He's also encountered people that are skeptical of Ultimate Frisbee even being a sport. But he's never let that faze him.

"I'd say you can't knock on it until you try it. It's a lot of fun and I've enjoyed it a lot more than any other sport," he answers.

The Los Angeles Wildfire player admits he was a bit disappointed when he found out Van Nuys didn't have an ultimate frisbee team because he knows both La Quinta and Santa Monica high schools do. The thought of trying to start one did cross his mind, but he decided to stay silent on the subject.

"I was never confident enough to start it up myself."

One thing that leads a lot of people from pursuing Ultimate Frisbee as a full time job is the pay. Schmidt de-

scribes it as a "niche" sport compared to the reception baseball and basketball receive.

"I'd say a professional Ultimate Frisbee player gets paid around 30 bucks a game," he said. According to the Chicago Tribune, most American Ultimate Disc League (AUDL) players make anything between \$350-\$700 per season, while a few of the top players can make around \$1,400 per season — not nearly enough to make a living.

"I think it definitely has the possibility of gaining traction but that's just the sad reality."

Over the last couple of years the sport has been on a big rise with some games being nationally televised on sports broadcast powerhouses such as ESPN.

While his future in the sport remains uncertain, Schmidt hopes he'll have the chance to play at a college level if he's given the opportunity. "It's definitely a hobby, not a lifestyle."

As of right now, Schmidt and the rest of the Wildfires are preparing for an upcoming spring tournament where they hope to dominate despite being a bit short on athletes.

"My hopes for the future is that Ultimate Frisbee won't be looked down upon and that anyone who'd like to play it should have the chance to do so."